

## WORLD WAR I in a Nutshell

**World War I** or the **First World War** was a war fought by many countries, which is why it is called a "world" war. It started in 1914 and ended in 1918. World War I was called the **Great War** or **the War to End all Wars**. 135 countries took part in World War I, and more than 15,000,000 people died in the war.

World War I was fought on most of the continent of [Europe](#). The actual fighting that happened during the war was fought on many different fronts. The [Western Front](#) was where most of the fighting between [Germany](#) and the Allies happened. The system of [trenches](#) marked the location of the Western Front. Most of the fighting here was [trench warfare](#). The [Eastern Front](#) was fought in Central and Eastern Europe and was one of the main places where World War I took place. The fighting on the Eastern Front was not trench warfare like it was on the Western Front, but instead depended on having front lines of soldiers ready to fight the enemy. The other fronts that had a lot of fighting include the [Middle Eastern Front](#) and the [Italian Front](#). Fighting also took place in Africa, China, and at sea as well as in the air.

The war was ended by the signing of many different [treaties](#), the most important being the [Treaty of Versailles](#).

World War I was the first war where [tanks](#), [aeroplanes](#), and [submarines](#) or underwater boats (U-boats) were used as common weapons.

### **START of the WAR**

One person who strongly supported [Serbian](#) power sent five men to kill [Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria](#) in Sarajevo. A Bosnian student named [Gavrilo Princip](#), shot him and his pregnant wife (Sophie) with a pistol.

Austria-Hungary blamed Serbia for the assassination. Germany, which supported Austria-Hungary, said that they should make a list of things (Ultimatum) that Serbia should do as punishment for killing the Archduke. Austria-Hungary was very strict, perhaps because they wanted an excuse to start the war. Though Serbia agreed to most of ten of the things on the

list, they could not agree to them all. Austria-Hungary then declared war on Serbia.

Russia joined the war on Serbia's side because the people of Serbia were [Slavic](#), like Russia, and the Slavic countries had agreed to help each other if they were attacked. Russia did not like Germany because of things Germany had done in the past to become stronger. Germany declared war on Russia, and used a plan to attack Russia that had been created before the war, but it also involved attacking France and Belgium. France and also Great Britain joined the war as allies

This quickly led to a full-scale war. Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. Both country's allies became involved in the war, and soon most of Europe became involved.

### **US INVOLVEMENT**

The U-boats attacked passenger ships (**Lusitania**) that were carrying civilians to Great Britain. The Germans thought that the Americans were helping only the British and not being neutral. "Neutral" means that a country is not involved in the war. But then many American and British noncombatants were killed by the submarines.

Germany also wrote a secret [telegram](#) note to [Mexico](#) in code suggesting that the two countries work together to attack the United States. This note is called the [Zimmerman Telegram](#) because the person who sent it was named Arthur Zimmerman. It offered [Mexico](#) land in the [southwestern United States](#) that the [United States](#) took in previous wars. Spies from the [United Kingdom](#) found out about the note and told the [United States](#). American people became angry and many decided that they wanted their country to enter the war to punish Germany. For these and other reasons, on April 6, [1917](#) the [United States](#) declared war against Germany and became part of the Allies.

## **RUSSIA WITHDRAWS FROM WAR**

The leader of the Bolsheviks was [Vladimir Lenin](#) and he had gotten rid of the monarchy (Tsar Nicholas II) and become the leader of Russia. The new government asked the Germans for peace, and signed a peace treaty called [Brest-Litvosk](#) with the Central Powers in March 1918 at the city of Brest Litovsk. The Germans and Russians stopped fighting. This gave Germany lots of land in Eastern Europe and the Baltic Sea.

## **TREATY of VERSAILLES**

After the war, the Germans had to agree to the [Treaty of Versailles](#). Germany had to pay \$66.7 billion in [reparations](#). They also had to take responsibility for the war. They finished paying the debt in 2010. Part of the treaty said the countries of the world should come together to make an international cooperative organization to stop wars from happening. This organization was called the [League of Nations](#). The [US Senate](#) didn't agree with this, even though it was the idea of the [US president, Woodrow Wilson](#). Woodrow Wilson tried to tell the American people that they should agree, but the U.S. never joined the League of Nations. Problems with the Treaty in Germany would later lead to the [Second World War](#).

## **QUESTIONS**

1. Where was WORLD WAR I fought mainly?
2. Describe the Western Front.
3. Describe the Eastern Front.
4. Where was trench warfare fought?
5. Why did Austria-Hungary declare war on Serbia?
6. What were 4 new weapons used?
7. Why did the Germans attack the Lusitania?
8. Who was Lenin-what country did he become head of?
9. When Russia withdrew and signed a treaty with Germany-what did they have to give up?
10. Describe in 3 words the League of Nations.